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Official Records

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Wednesday, 15 December 2004, at 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 56 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(s) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community

Draft resolution (A/59/L.42)

The President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on agenda item 56 and its sub-items (a) to (t) at its 38th to 40th plenary meetings, held on 21 and 22 October 2004.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mauritius to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.42.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): On behalf of the States members of the Southern African Development Community — Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, my own country Mauritius and the candidate country Madagascar — I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.42, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community", under agenda item 56 (s), on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations.

Let me first, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community, express our sincere appreciation to all those countries that participated in the informal consultations on the draft resolution, and also to those countries which have joined in sponsoring the resolution, namely Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Jamaica, Japan, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, the Sudan, Timor-Leste and Togo. We hope that, as was the case for the 2002 resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Community (resolution 57/44), this year's draft text can be adopted by consensus.

In introducing draft resolution A/59/L.42 this year, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is reaffirming its commitment to enhanced cooperation with the United Nations and with development partners. We welcome ongoing efforts in the maintenance and strengthening of that partnership aimed at fostering closer cooperation with the United Nations and its related agencies, funds and programmes.

At the Mauritius summit held in August 2004, SADC heads of State and Government adopted the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, aimed at enhancing the transparency and credibility of elections and democratic governance in SADC member States. Peace and security are the linchpins of socio-economic development. It is in that context that I am pleased to inform the Assembly that at the SADC summit in Mauritius, the SADC Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation

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(SIPO), was officially launched. That plan complements the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, which is SADC's 15-year plan designed to provide strategic objectives and priorities for the policies and goals of the community. The plan, in effect, sets targets towards the attainment of agreed goals on a coherent and comprehensive development agenda.

A key factor to the implementation, and indeed to the success, of that plan and the goals set out in the Strategic Indicative Plan, is the availability of resources. While SADC appreciates the financial, technical and material support of the United Nations funds and programmes, as well as that of the international community, an appeal is being made through this draft resolution for the continued and enhanced support of the United Nations and its related agencies, as well as the international community, for the effective realization of the goals and achievement of the targets set in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan and the Strategic Indicative Plan.

The draft resolution also notes the gravity of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in respect of which the SADC region is currently one of the most affected. While the Community continues to play its part in addressing that problem through the implementation of the policy commitments of the Maseru Declaration and the related Plan of Action, we solicit stronger support and assistance from the United Nations and the international community as a whole to fight this scourge.

The draft resolution also addresses one other important issue for the Community; I refer here to the continued efforts of SADC to make southern Africa a landmine-free zone. We appeal to the United Nations and its related bodies, as well as to the international community, to assist and support SADC in its efforts to rid the region of landmines.

Finally, let me express once again our appreciation to United Nations Member States for their support for the granting of observer status to the Southern African Development Community. Resolution 59/49, adopted by the General Assembly on Thursday, 2 December, will undoubtedly serve to strengthen and consolidate cooperation and enhance interaction between SADC and the United Nations in order to appropriately promote and enhance peace, stability, socio-economic development and the broader principles of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/59/L.42, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community". Before the Assembly takes a decision on this draft resolution, I would like to announce that since it was presented, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/59/L.42: Cameroon and the Sudan.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/59/L.42?

Draft resolution A/59/L.42 was adopted (resolution 59/140).

The President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (s) of agenda item 56?

It was so decided.

Item 39 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Draft resolution (A/59/L.49)

The President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the General Assembly held its debate on agenda item 39 and sub-items (a) and (c) at the 51st and 52nd meetings, held on 11 November 2004.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.49.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, a draft resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, contained in document A/59/L.49. I should like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution before the Assembly, the following countries have become sponsors: Belarus, Cape Verde, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, the

Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro, South Africa and Ukraine.

The text was discussed during several informal consultations. Valuable proposals were made for the improvement of the text, and agreement was reached on all paragraphs. My delegation is grateful for the contributions made by other delegations and would like to thank fellow sponsors and other delegations for the good and constructive spirit of cooperation and partnership in which the consultations were held.

The draft resolution begins by recalling the landmark resolution 46/182, which, of course, still guides the work of the United Nations in the humanitarian field. It reaffirms the principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality for the provision of humanitarian assistance and recognizes that independence is also an important guiding principle.

It expresses the General Assembly's grave concern about, and strongly condemns, all acts of violence against civilian populations in many emergency situations and reiterates that such acts can constitute violations or grave breaches of international humanitarian law and, in defined circumstances, crimes against humanity and/or war crimes. It calls upon States to adopt preventive measures and effective responses to acts of violence against civilian populations and invites States to promote a culture of protection.

It also expresses grave concern about the lack of access to victims of humanitarian emergencies in many parts of the world and calls upon Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations to ensure safe and unhindered access to affected populations.

The draft resolution encourages Member States to continue to work with humanitarian agencies in endeavours to provide a more predictable response to the needs of internally displaced persons and, in that regard, calls for international support, upon request, for capacity-building efforts of Governments.

It also highlights the need to mobilize adequate support, including financial resources, for emergency humanitarian assistance at all levels and emphasizes that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs should benefit from adequate and more predictable funding, while stressing the need to broaden its donor base. It calls upon donors to take further steps to improve their policies and practices with respect to humanitarian assistance and calls upon relevant United Nations organizations to continue to improve transparency and reliability of humanitarian needs assessments.

The draft resolution furthermore encourages the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to continue its efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance and calls upon all relevant actors to cooperate to ensure timely implementation of Economic and Social Council resolutions. The importance of discussions on humanitarian policies and activities in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council and of their further revitalization is emphasized.

The draft resolution, in its final paragraph, requests the Secretary-General to report to the next session of the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on progress made in strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

My delegation and the other sponsors hope that the draft resolution contained in document A/59/L.49 can be adopted by consensus.

The President (*spoke in French*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/59/L.49, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/59/L.49?

Draft resolution A/59/L.49 was adopted (resolution 59/141).

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Thammavongsa (Lao People's Democratic Republic): The Lao People's Democratic Republic supports the efforts of the international community to address humanitarian emergencies around the world. In that connection, we appreciate the important role played by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. For that reason, we can support

the primary objective of draft resolution A/59/L.49, on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

However, in our view, humanitarian emergencies should be addressed in a uniform manner throughout the world, without favouritism or double standards. In such endeavours, the principles of neutrality and non-interference should also be respected.

The Non-Aligned Movement, at its summit conference held in Kuala Lumpur in 2003, reaffirmed the Movement's commitment to enhancing international cooperation aimed at resolving international problems of a humanitarian nature in full compliance with the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, the Movement reiterated its rejection of the so-called right of humanitarian intervention, which has no basis in the Charter or in international law. Therefore, we would like to dissociate ourselves from paragraph 15 of draft resolution A/59/L.49, concerning the so-called obligation of States to protect civilians in armed conflicts.

Mr. Filgueiras Rivero (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Draft resolution A/59/L.49 having been adopted, the delegation of Cuba wishes to dissociate itself from the language used in paragraph 15. Concepts such as the culture of protection, utilized in the context of the humanitarian assistance needed by millions of persons throughout the world, are being used in order to contravene international law and the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. For Cuba, the primary way in which to adequately assist people in need in cases of humanitarian emergency is, above all, to strictly respect international law, particularly international humanitarian law.

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 39.

Agenda item 35 (*continued*)

Culture of peace

Draft resolutions (A/59/L.17/Rev.1 and A/59/L.21)

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of agenda item 35, entitled "Culture of peace".

Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on agenda item 35 jointly with agenda item 47 at its 41st and 42nd plenary meetings, held on 26 and 27 October 2004.

I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.17/Rev.1.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, the draft resolution entitled "Promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation", contained in document A/59/L.17/Rev.1.

All religions and cultures share a common set of universal values. Religion and culture, therefore, must not be allowed to become a source of division, as they are sometimes portrayed in the present-day world. Rather, we must cherish the unity and indivisibility of the human race and all mankind, no matter to what religion or particular culture a person belongs.

In that context, and in order to develop a new era of hope and peaceful coexistence, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on a Culture of Peace, resolution 53/243 A of 13 September 1999. That Declaration defines a culture of peace as a set of values, attitudes and behaviours based on respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation; full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law; full respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; and a commitment to peaceful settlement of conflicts.

Following those guidelines, it was expected that civilizations, faiths and peoples would come closer and promote a culture of peace. Instead, the world has since witnessed a resurgence of religious and cultural intolerance and violence. Misunderstanding and suspicion between faiths and cultures in various parts of the world have further accentuated the gulf between communities, religions and civilizations.

President Musharraf of Pakistan, in successive statements at the General Assembly, has urged the international community to bridge the gulf of misunderstanding between Islam and the West. He has

highlighted promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation. In his address to the General Assembly during its fifty-eighth session (see A/58/PV.9), the President of Pakistan proposed a comprehensive strategy of enlightened moderation, which contained the principles of enhancing human welfare, freedom and progress everywhere, of forging harmony and understanding among all peoples and of seeking peaceful solutions to conflicts and disputes. With those objectives in mind, Pakistan has submitted to the General Assembly, for the second successive year, a draft resolution on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation.

The provisions of draft resolution A/59/L.17/Rev.1 are self-evident. In paragraph 15, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to ensure the widest dissemination of the relevant United Nations material related to the present resolution. In paragraph 16, it also requests the Secretary-General, in the context of his report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session under the item entitled "Culture of peace", to include information on the implementation of the present resolution.

I would like to indicate a minor revision to the draft text. This amendment has already been communicated to the Secretariat as well as to all delegations. In paragraph 9 of the draft resolution, after the word "education", the following words should be inserted: "as well as development of progressive curricula and textbooks". The remainder of the paragraph remains unchanged. I am also pleased to announce that, in addition to the countries mentioned in document A/59/L.17/Rev.1, Malaysia and China have joined as sponsors of the draft resolution.

I am confident that the draft resolution will be endorsed unanimously by the General Assembly. This will be an affirmation by members of the international community of the shared commitment to advance the goals of universal understanding, harmony and peace, as well as security and prosperity among all nations and peoples of all faiths and cultures.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.21.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): The past century was perhaps the most violent in human history. Wars wreaked unspeakable violence, millions perished, women were dishonoured and children were robbed of their future. Paradoxically, it was also the century that witnessed, in many parts of the world, the triumph of non-violence, the end of colonial rule and the efflorescence of civil society.

The advent of the new century and the new millennium gave us a unique opportunity to make a new beginning, which would include building on the positive developments of the past. Moreover, the new century is one in which the world should be characterized by a new dominant value. It is Bangladesh's cherished aspiration that the contemporary age will be one in which a culture of peace will reign.

What caused Bangladesh to initiate draft resolution A/59/L.21 was the desire to create a system in which amity would supplant atrocity, harmony would overcome hatred and stability would remove mutual suspicion. Our nation's past history was also an important factor in generating our enthusiasm for the draft resolution. Because we were born of conflict, we saw the values in the principles of democracy, tolerance, solidarity and respect for diversity, dialogue and understanding. Those ideals were reflected in the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted by the General Assembly as resolution 53/243 on 13 September 1999 after prolonged and successful facilitation by Bangladesh.

The Programme of Action identifies major areas of focus: education; sustainable economic and social development; human rights; equality between women and men; democratic participation; advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity; participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge; and international peace and security. In each area, specific actions are set out that will help to foster a culture of peace. The Programme involves various diverse actors: States, international organizations, civil society, community leaders, parents, teachers, artists, professors, journalists, humanitarian workers — people from all walks of life and with all kinds of backgrounds.

It is our view that the implementation of this draft resolution will ultimately lead to the promotion of international peace and security. The draft resolution designates the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the lead agency, accorded the responsibility for coordinating all

relevant activities during the Decade. UNESCO, we will recall, was founded on the premise that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". The agency has been playing a significant role in highlighting our cause. We applaud its action and urge it to continue its important work.

We deeply appreciate the positive participation of civil society. We encourage civil society to undertake more activities to complement the initiatives of Member States, of the United Nations and of other global and regional organizations.

As all are aware, the vibrant civil society of Bangladesh plays such a role. I am pleased to be able to share the fact that later today, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, a Bangladeshi non-governmental organization, and its Executive Director, Fazle Hasan Abed, will receive a prestigious award of the United Nations Development Programme.

Bangladesh has had an important role in the maintenance of global peace and security. It has consistently been one of the largest participants in peacekeeping operations. Our peacekeepers carry the ideals and the values of a culture of peace wherever they serve. We believe that in order for our development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, to be achieved, we need a world order that is informed by a culture of peace.

As with similar texts in previous years, this year my delegation has the honour of introducing, on behalf of 61 sponsors, the draft resolution contained in document A/59/L.21, entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010".

In addition to the countries listed in the document, I have much pleasure to announce the names of the following countries, to be added to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution: Argentina, Brazil, India, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon and Mozambique.

The draft resolution is virtually identical to resolution 58/11 of 10 November 2003. Only a few technical updates have been incorporated into the text. The draft resolution stipulates that at the midpoint of the Decade, in 2005, the General Assembly should have one day of plenary meetings devoted to reviewing how far the objectives of the Declaration and the Programme of Action have been achieved.

It is our fervent hope that the draft resolution will receive the unanimous support of the Assembly, reflecting global solidarity in the endeavours to achieve this noble aim.

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/59/L.17/Rev.1, as orally revised, and on draft resolution A/59/L.21.

We will first take a decision on A/59/L.17/Rev.1, entitled "Promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation", as orally revised.

Since draft resolution A/59/L.17/Rev.1 was issued, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Cape Verde, China, Ecuador, Malaysia, Tajikistan and Timor-Leste.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/59/L.17/Rev.1, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/59/L.17/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 59/142).

The President (*spoke in French*): We now turn to draft resolution A/59/L.21, entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010".

Since draft resolution A/59/L.21 was issued, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Algeria, Bolivia, Guyana, Oman and Tajikistan.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/59/L.21?

Draft resolution A/59/L.21 was adopted (resolution 59/143).

The President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 35?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 21 (*continued*)

The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict

Letter from Canada transmitting the report of the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme (A/59/590)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.46)

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.46.

Mr. Rock (Canada): It is a great honour for Canada to address the General Assembly as the current Chair of the Kimberley Process and, on behalf of the sponsors, to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.46. We also add the following sponsors to the draft resolution: Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Croatia, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Singapore, Spain, Tanzania and Thailand.

In its capacity this year as Chair of this important Process, Canada is pleased to report that the Kimberley Process is effectively responding to the mandate it was given by the General Assembly to combat the role of diamonds in fuelling armed conflict. The report (A/59/590) and the draft resolution to be adopted today reflect the substantial progress and momentum that have been realized during 2004.

I can report to the Assembly that the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for rough diamonds is working. The overwhelming majority of rough diamonds produced and traded the world over now adhere to the Kimberley Process requirements, resulting in an unprecedented degree of transparency and government control. Broad participation in the Kimberley Process makes it difficult for anyone to trade rough diamonds outside the Certification Scheme. Since the launch of the Scheme in January 2003, authorities have seized dozens of diamond shipments that were in violation of Kimberley Process procedures. In most of those cases, criminal charges have been laid, and prosecutions either have been concluded or are continuing.

The peer review system is a major accomplishment for monitoring implementation of the Certification Scheme by participants in the Kimberley Process. In 2004, 11 peer review visits were completed, and almost all participants have volunteered to receive such visits.

Most important, the Kimberley Process is having a major economic impact in countries affected by conflict diamonds, such as Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone. With the help of the Certification Scheme, growing volumes of rough diamonds are exported through official government channels. For example, in 2000, rough diamond exports from Sierra Leone were valued at only $10 million. In 2003, Sierra Leone reported exports at the value of $76 million and estimates that diamond exports will reach $130 million by the end of the current calendar year.

The Kimberley Process is crucial to contributing to the consolidation of peace in conflict-diamond-affected countries. Peace agreements in those countries have substantially reduced the risk of conflict diamonds entering the legitimate market. In several cases, however, these peace agreements remain fragile; they require active international support.

With the Russian Federation as Chair and Botswana as Vice-Chair of the Process for 2005, we are confident that the Kimberley Process will remain an important tool for conflict prevention by advancing effective implementation of the Certification Scheme. We expect that a comprehensive review of the Certification Scheme in 2006 will highlight the role of the Kimberley Process in conflict prevention.

Canada has always been of the view that the Kimberley Process has a significance that goes well beyond the problems connected with selling diamonds to fund armed conflict, because the Kimberley Process demonstrates in a compelling way the power of a new approach in international diplomacy, one that focuses on human security. The need for a broader approach to security stems from the changing nature of armed conflict. The overwhelming majority of today's armed conflicts take place within, and not between, States; civilians account for a growing number of the casualties in these conflicts.

The promotion of human security is a response to these new global realities — realities to which the international community must adapt. Ultimately, we must develop new concepts, adjust diplomatic practices and renew institutions upon which the international system is based, with a view to enhancing the security of all the world's people.

(*spoke in French*)

The Kimberley Process sets an important precedent for addressing the role of natural resources in armed conflict. As the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change rightly points out,

> "A new challenge for the United Nations is to provide support to weak States — especially, but not limited to, those recovering from war — in the management of their natural resources to avoid future conflicts." (*A/59/565, para. 91*)

In that regard, Canada unreservedly supports the High-level Panel's recommendation that

> "The United Nations should work with national authorities, international financial institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector to develop norms governing the management of natural resources for countries emerging from or at risk of conflict." (*para. 92*)

As outgoing Chair, Canada would like to take this opportunity to thank the Kimberley Process participants, the diamond industry and civil society organizations for their close collaboration during our term. The Kimberley Process is a remarkable success story for the international community. It is living testimony of the substantial progress that can be achieved through partnership towards a common end. We hope that the Kimberley Process will serve as an inspiration and as a guide for addressing the broader issue of the role of natural resources in armed conflict.

Mr. Baum (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): There is no need to recall the harmful role played by the illicit conflict-diamond trade in the armed conflicts of diamond-producing regions, or the massive human rights violations that have accompanied them. Nevertheless, in the span of under five years, the development and implementation of the international Certification Scheme for rough diamonds — the Kimberley Process — has proven to be an invaluable instrument in tackling the challenge posed by this relatively new type of war economy.

The Kimberley Process is a perfect example of the type of innovative response required by the complexity of modern-day conflicts. It also highlights the increased need to involve non-State actors, particularly the private sector, in effective conflict prevention and management policies. The primary responsibility for peace and security resides with States, but a real culture of prevention must include all concerned actors.

The Kimberley Process must gradually be made universal and must be backed by an effective control system. By excluding one of its members, the others demonstrated their firm commitment to the system's credibility. But exclusion, however necessary it may be, cannot be the only response, and we were pleased to note the recent consultations and the proposed plan for that member's readmission.

The Kimberley Process has never been regarded as an end in itself; we consider it important to explore the possibility of developing similar processes for other raw materials which are at the root of armed conflicts or that contribute to prolonging them. Switzerland is prepared to commit itself, together with other States and actors involved, to seeking appropriate and effective solutions.

Certification of raw materials in countries affected by conflict is one method for reducing the trade that contributes to sustaining such conflicts. Above and beyond that, however, it seems to us that the time has come to better identify minimal norms and standards for the exploitation of natural resources in conflict zones.

The recent experience of the latest expert panels has shown that the international community lacks clear criteria for unequivocally distinguishing between legal and illicit economic activities in conflict situations. The existence of this grey area in law — or rather, this lack of law — hampers not only conflict-prevention efforts but also any sanctions that might be imposed by the Security Council, and it harms legal trade as a whole. In this respect, Switzerland would be very interested in a process aimed at establishing a set of clear regulations for economic actors operating in conflict zones. This could take the form, for example, of a mechanism similar to the certification system launched at Interlaken.

Mr. Holliday (United States of America): The United States is pleased to sponsor draft resolution A/59/L.46, on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict. We have been pursuing a solution to the problem of conflict diamonds since their horrific, destructive effects became known in the late 1990s. We have worked hard with other Governments, the diamond industry and human rights organizations to create a controlled trading system for rough diamonds. We seek

to halt the flow of conflict diamonds while avoiding harm to the legitimate diamond industry.

We have seen progress toward this goal. In November 2003, 36 countries and the European Community pledged commitment to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for rough diamonds. Domestically, each participant has put legislation in place to implement their commitments to this Process. In the United States, Congress passed the Clean Diamond Trade Act, and President George W. Bush signed it, within just three months. We have subsequently put into place regulations that implement that legislation and, along with other Kimberley Process members, have submitted our first annual report to the Chair of the Process.

The progress that participants have made in implementing the Kimberley Process has been remarkable. At the October 2004 plenary meeting in Gatineau, Canada, 42 countries and the European Community, comprising some 98 per cent of the world diamond trade, participated actively in the proceedings. The peer review mechanism is exceeding expectations. We expect that, by the end of 2004, 15 countries, accounting for more than two thirds of world diamond production, will have concluded peer review visits. Annual reports on Kimberly Process implementation have been received from all participants of the Process. A comprehensive statistical database has been developed, and the working group on statistics is actively seeking to improve data quality.

We are proud of our leadership role in this, a role that our Congress has actively and repeatedly supported. We recognize that the system would never have come into being without the leadership of a number of key participants, including African producer States. The list of Governments which have played a leadership role is long, as is the list of participants, for unless each participant shows leadership, this voluntary system will not work.

We would like to thank South Africa, the inaugural Chair of the Kimberley Process, which effectively brought the system from vision to reality; Canada, the outgoing Chair, which has led the Process effectively during its first year of implementation; the Russian Federation, the incoming Chair; and Botswana, which has agreed to serve as Vice-Chair. We also acknowledge the important work of the European Commission in furthering the process.

The Kimberley Process would never have come this far without the active support and participation of the diamond industry and concerned non-governmental organizations. They have offered invaluable insight on what must be done to halt the scourge of conflict diamonds. The unique tripartite structure, involving concerned Governments, industry and civil society, has enriched the Kimberley Process and has contributed to its credibility.

Finally, we welcome the willingness of Canada to serve as Chair of an ad hoc group looking into the future of the Kimberley Process beyond 2006. As the process moves from conflict management to conflict prevention, it is important to ensure that all the appropriate tools remain in place to consolidate peace and avert a potential resumption of hostilities. We are grateful for the opportunity to speak on this very important and critical subject.

Mr. Chulkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation attaches priority importance to the development of international cooperation aimed at breaking the connection between the illicit trade in diamonds and armed conflict. We are in favour of the implementation of consensus agreements reached within the framework of the Kimberley Process with a view to preventing the introduction of conflict diamonds to international markets.

As an active participant in the Kimberley Process since its inception, Russia fully recognizes and shares its goals. That is, moreover, our obligation as one of the world leaders in diamond production. In accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on conflict diamonds, in particular General Assembly resolution 55/56 of 1 December 2000, Russia is doing its utmost to ensure the normal functioning and development of the global diamond industry, which makes a critical contribution to the economic development of many countries.

It is well known that the decisions of the Kimberley Process, including those of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for rough diamonds, are not binding on participants. Essentially, all activities under the Process rely on relevant national laws for their regulatory basis. Realizing their growing responsibility, members of the Process have assumed serious commitments and taken steps that sometimes require changes in their national legislation and

business practices in order to implement the goals enshrined in the relevant United Nations resolutions.

We welcome the steps already taken within the Kimberley Process, in particular the development and application of the Certification Scheme, as well as the series of voluntary commitments made by the diamond industry. We believe that, even in its present form, the Certification Scheme represents an efficient tool for combating the use of diamonds for the cross-border smuggling of funds and the laundering of proceeds from criminal activities. We note with satisfaction that the measures taken within the Process have helped to strengthen control over the diamond industry worldwide and have contributed to a more transparent international trade in diamonds.

Many countries, primarily on the African continent, have increased their legal diamond exports dramatically. Thus, their tax base has expanded and national budgets received additional funds. Some countries have begun to search for effective ways to establish or improve control over those prospectors and businessmen in the diamond industry who have not yet been put under the necessary controls.

All those results give reason to hope that the goals formulated by the General Assembly will be attained and that the link between diamonds on the one hand and local conflicts and illegal activities on the other will be broken for good. We commend the constructive cooperation among participants in the Kimberley Process, which has resulted in considerable progress in recent years. We would like to underscore the important role played by South Africa and Canada, as Chairs of the Process, in streamlining the Process, developing its format and dynamics and setting priorities and key tasks.

We would also like to mention a number of difficulties in the implementation of the Kimberley Process arrangements. The application of a number of aspects of the Certification Scheme has highlighted the need to overcome certain national traditions and particular aspects of the diamond business. Some countries are in need of assistance in addressing these matters, while others need more time to fully and accurately meet the requirements of the Certification Scheme. Russia is ready to provide those countries with any assistance they need.

On 29 October 2004, during the regular plenary meeting of Kimberley Process participating countries, it was decided that Russia would become Chair of the Process in 2005. I take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for the kind words addressed to the Russian Federation by the delegations of Canada and the United States.

In its new capacity, Russia will seek most thoroughly and fully to comply with the Certification Scheme and to ensure that all participants comply with the Process, to intensify interaction with representatives of the diamond industry to ensure that all stakeholders in the diamond business worldwide adopt the measures called for by the Kimberly Process. We will actively pursue the policy of the widest possible expansion of the Process and the involvement of new participants.

Russia intends to undertake considerable efforts to fine-tune and further improve the work of the working groups and committees of the Kimberley Process, its monitoring and review missions and its analytical and information mechanisms, including the development of relations with civil society. In that work we shall count on the understanding and support of the Governments of the participating States, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, representatives of the diamond industry, non-governmental organizations, and the mass media.

The character of the person nominated by our country to the post testifies to the importance that Russia attaches to its responsibilities as Chair of the Kimberly Process. Mr. Vyacheslav Shtyrov, President of the republic of Sakha, Yakutia, was head of Russia's largest diamond producing company, ALROSA, and has vast expertise in the diamond industry.

In conclusion, we welcome the election of Botswana as Vice-Chair of the Kimberley Process for 2005, and we are prepared to fully cooperate with it — as well as with South Africa and Canada, former Chairs of the Process — to achieve the goals of the Kimberly Process.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with resolution 3208 (XXIX) of 11 October 1974, I now give the floor to the observer of the European Community.

Mr. Richardson (European Community): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilization

and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and the European Free Trade Area countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, all align themselves with this statement.

The annual debate by the General Assembly on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict is an occasion for us to take stock of a problem that has contributed to some of the most brutal conflicts of recent years and that has threatened an entire industry. But it is also, this year, an occasion for us to applaud one of the most remarkable conflict-prevention initiatives the multilateral system has yet seen.

When the Assembly last debated the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict, during the fifty-eighth session, the overwhelming sense was already one of satisfaction at the progress achieved by the international community, through the Kimberley Process, in addressing the scourge of conflict diamonds. The General Assembly particularly welcomed the introduction by the Kimberley Process of a peer review system to provide assurances that the provisions of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme were in fact being implemented by all participants in the Scheme. At the same time, there may still have been those then who saw the Kimberley Process as yet another pious declaration of intent, with little clout to implement its provisions.

Less than one year later, there can no longer be any doubt that the Kimberley Process is indeed a remarkable success. The excellent report presented by Canada as Chair of the Process (A/59/590, annex) makes clear the extent to which the Certification Scheme has transformed the diamond trade at the global level. The Kimberley Process has given legitimate Governments an unprecedented degree of control over their diamond resources. It has clamped down on smuggling, with numerous cases of the seizure of illicit diamonds which would otherwise have ended up on world markets. And it has prompted participating countries to introduce effective internal controls over diamond production and trade.

The figures speak for themselves. Since the Certification Scheme came into effect, the proportion of diamonds which are exported and traded legally has gone up dramatically. And, thanks to the Kimberley Process, there is now serious hope in many producing countries not only that diamonds will cease to fuel violent conflict but indeed that they will come to be seen increasingly as an engine for development.

Effective monitoring of implementation has been absolutely central to this success. The European Union is delighted at the great strides which the Kimberley Process has taken over the past year in implementing its peer review system. Since the beginning of 2004, no fewer than 11 participants, the European Community included, have received a review visit from the Kimberley Process. Virtually all other participants have invited a review visit. All participants have submitted annual reports on their implementation of the Scheme. And specific compliance issues have been addressed successfully by the Process in a spirit of cooperation and dialogue, but mindful of the imperative need to preserve the integrity of the Scheme. In a very short period of time, the Kimberley Process has thus surpassed the most optimistic expectations of what it could deliver.

Much of the credit for what the Kimberley Process has achieved over the past year must go to Canada as its Chair in 2004. It is largely thanks to Canada's inspired and determined leadership that the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme has emerged strengthened from the challenges it has faced, and is now such a robust and effective instrument. The EU looks forward to welcoming Russia as Chair and Botswana as Vice-Chair of the Process during 2005, and offers its strong support as Russia takes up the Chair's mantle. The EU also wishes to commend the highly constructive role played in the Kimberley Process by industry and civil society.

Important challenges remain for the Kimberley Process. Perhaps the most important one is to resist any temptation towards complacency. Many of the diamond-producing countries and regions which the Process was designed to help remain highly vulnerable to renewed conflict. The Certification Scheme remains absolutely essential to consolidating peace in those regions.

Moreover, the continued implementation of a comprehensive peer review system will remain a central plank for ensuring full implementation. The European Community, as Chair of the Working Group on Monitoring within the Kimberley Process, remains committed to working towards that objective with all

other participants, as mandated by the recent Ottawa plenary meeting. We also hope that the international community will increasingly reach out to those participants in the Scheme who may require external assistance in enhancing their capacity to implement the Scheme.

Finally, the Process will be called upon over the course of the next year to initiate a review of the Certification Scheme. The EU believes that the continued need for the Certification Scheme as a conflict prevention instrument should be the foremost consideration as we approach the review process.

Let me conclude by noting that the Kimberley Process has shown itself deserving of the trust placed in it by the General Assembly. We urge that draft resolution A/59/L.46 receive the strong support of the General Assembly. The Kimberley Process is a true multilateral success story, and the sustained endorsement of the United Nations will give it the authority and legitimacy it needs to persevere with its vital work.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/59/L.46, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts". I would like to announce that since its introduction, Bulgaria has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/59/L.46.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/59/L.46?

Draft resolution A/59/L.46 was adopted (resolution 59/144).

The President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 21?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.